

# Targeting Wellness Newsletter

## Good News for Good Health!

December 2021

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*My wish for you this coming year  
is that you have...*

The *gallantry* to let go of any failures, perceived shortcomings and regrets that may be holding you down.

The *wisdom* to realize how important you are and that you are in control of your own destiny.

The *belief* in yourself that you can be who you really want to be and it's never too late!

The *determination* to look those goals & desires in the face, the *fearlessness* to go after them and the *realization* that you *can achieve* them.

Finally the *motivation to start*. You only have one chance at this life.

**MAKE YOURSELF PROUD!**

## At Least—Maintain Don't Gain This Holiday Season

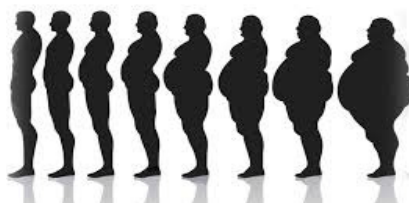
The added holiday stress causes many of us to eat more than we should of foods that are convenient vs. foods high in nutrition; plus being emulated with goodies in the office and at parties could all result in added weight. This is not the time to try and lose weight but simply do your best NOT TO GAIN! The holiday's provide opportunities to have those foods that may be a family tradition. It's not a time for deprivation or dieting. It's a time to celebrate but keeping your weight in check.

### Tip:

While it may sound counterintuitive, eating before going to a work dinner or happy hour can actually take off pounds. A series of studies out of Penn State found that noshing on an apple or a broth-based soup prior to sitting down to a restaurant meal can reduce total calorie intake by 20 percent. With the average restaurant meal weighing in at 1,128 calories, saving 20 percent can surely add up!

1. **Control portions:** Studies show that the more food you are served, the more you will eat even if you don't particularly like what you are eating!
2. **Keep moving:** Exercise is even more important for maintaining weight loss than for taking off the pounds in the first place. And as noted on the previous page, it's a great way to help you cope with stress. It can give you the energy needed to tackle that endless "to do" list. Do whatever you can to squeeze in even 10-minute intervals of some type of activity throughout your day. Something is better than nothing!
3. **Weigh in regularly:** Keeping weight in check at least once a week is important. Best to weigh yourself first thing in the morning. If you see the scale notching upward, it's a signal to cut back on portions or rev up your exercise.
4. **Eat plenty of lean and plant based protein:** Boosting protein intake with lean meats, unsweetened non-dairy "milks", seafood, tofu, legumes, beans and nuts will help keep you satisfied longer. At the buffet table, complement your protein selection with high-fiber grains, fruits, and vegetables, which also help fill you up for relatively few calories.
5. **Have a healthy breakfast:** People who eat breakfast end up eating fewer calories throughout the day. It powers up the brain, gets the metabolism going and helps you perform any task better.
6. **Put it on a plate:** It's hard to keep track of how much food you are eating if you nibble without using a plate. Having snacks or finger food on a plate will help avoid the mindless hand-to-mouth munching that goes on at holiday parties. This could save you many extra calories.
7. **If you don't LOVE it, don't eat it:** Don't waste calories on foods that don't knock your socks off. If after one bite you don't love it, leave it.
8. **Enjoy soup or a salad before going to a party:** Studies have shown that a large green salad with light dressing or a bowl of broth-based vegetable soup, can reduce the total calories you eat during a meal. These super-nutritious foods take the edge off your appetite so you don't arrive starving.
9. **Satisfy a craving with a few bites:** A piece of pecan pie or a glass of eggnog can set you back by more than 400 calories. But if you just enjoy a few bites or choose a lower-calorie alternate (like pumpkin pie or low-fat eggnog) you can save yourself up to 200 calories.
10. **Savor every bite:** Sit down, relax, and enjoy every bite of your meal. Be mindful of what you are consuming helps you feel more satisfied, helps slow down your eating so you can recognize when you start to feel full.

This year give yourself the gift of health by managing your weight while you enjoy a guilt-free holiday banquet of deliciousness.



Resources: WebMD

### Did you know?

The amount of weight gain from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day can range from 1 to 10 pounds. Although one pound does not seem bad, the weight gained typically remains for the year. Therefore, the weight becomes the unwanted, un-returnable gift that keeps on giving and could be such a gift each holiday season. With that in mind, one pound each holiday could turn to 10 pounds in 10 years. Huge risk to your overall well-being and increases your chances for certain diseases.



## Some Ways to Avoid Getting Sick This Winter

We've heard it a million times but the first line of defense against infections this winter is to wash your hands. We usually get sick not from a cough or sneeze but often from taking your fingers and touching your eyes, nose and mouth. But even being careful, so many of us still have to deal with at least a few days of hacking, sneezing and lost productivity.

Of course getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet low in sugar and processed foods, and getting regular exercise will help keep our immune system working at it's best all year, we sometimes need a little help during cold and flu season. Trying one of these simple home remedies at the first sigh of illness could shorten the duration and intensity experienced.



**Garlic** is made of compounds that are potent against infection. Use it in cooking to help boost your immune function. But don't cook it to a crisp or leave it exposed to air. It can minimize its medicinal properties.

One clove a day is recommended

**Gargling** will help cut the mucus in your throat where viruses tend to nestle before finding their way to your cells. Start as soon as you come face-to-face with germs (pretty much any time you touch a public surface).

3x/day could reduce chances of catching a cold by 35%.

**Acupuncture** assures all your body's fluids are circulating as they should. Chinese medicine doctors believed that viruses enter through an area of our body called the "wind gate". Inserting needles into the upper back, near the shoulder blades, could close off this gate.

Many insurances are starting to cover this holistic treatment. It may be worth asking about and giving it a try.

**Wash with HOT water.** Washing clothes with very hot water and a full drying cycle can help prevent illness by killing some of the disease-causing viruses that can cling to our clothes. Also if you typically use a cotton purse, suggestion, store it until the spring.

The flu virus may survive 8-12 hrs on cotton and only 1 to 10 virus particles are necessary for infection.

**Quit smoking: (I know not simple) but** smoking increases your risk of infections by altering the structure of your respiratory tract and decreasing your immune system.

According to the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, smoking destroys the cilia (little hair-like fibers) inside your nose increasing the risk of infection.

**Stick to a regular sleep schedule.** Just because you may be someone who can stay up and feel fine the next day doesn't mean you should. To keep your system working smoothly, you should pick a time to go to bed and stick with it.

There is a clear link between sleep and your immune system. Also lack of sleep can cause weight gain.

**Clean your phone:** think about it, we carry our phones everywhere, often putting them down on counters or touching them after touching surfaces that could be contaminated. During this season, it may be wise to clean your smartphone 1x/day.

Clean them with microfiber cloths, rubbing alcohol and water, or pre-moistened disinfectant wipes.

### Book a Massage

Research in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* finds deep-muscle Swedish massage (compared to a light touch massage) can significantly increase levels of immune-boosting blood cells, while decreasing levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

Even better, these findings are the result of one session! So treat yourself!



## Managing Stress is Possible



I'm going to go out on a limb and say with certainty that there is no one among us that isn't aware of stress. Yet it's a topic I feel is worth addressing whenever possible. Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the ever-increasing demands of life. Over the last 18+ months, the topic of stress has been a major concern as it relates not only to our own well-being but that of our employees, colleagues, family members, friends, and even the world. That is a heavy burden to carry.

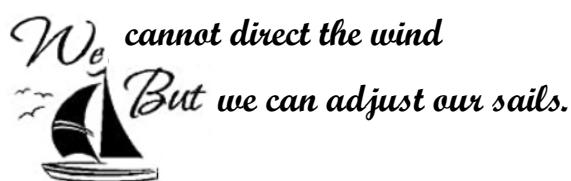
**With the holidays upon us**, the level of stress we feel often is elevated by the seasonal burdens and challenges. Overspending on gift demands, family interactions, over-indulging on holiday treats, slacking on our self-care routines, not to mention possible loneliness and memories that could generate sad or negative emotions.

**Stress**, you will recall, **is your brain's automatic response to a perceived threat**. Our brain comes hard-wired with an alarm system for your protection, signaling your body to release a burst of hormones to fuel your capacity for a response. This, we know as the "fight-or-flight (or freeze)" response. Once the threat is gone, your body is meant to return to a normal relaxed state. Unfortunately, the nonstop stress of modern life means that **your alarm system rarely shuts off**.

I have yet to meet a person who does not have an **inner critic**. This inner critic was formulated in childhood to help us cope with our surroundings. Even if our childhood was filled with happy memories, these "defense mechanisms" developed. When we become adults, they are no longer needed, however, now they have been engrained into our unconscious mind so they appear to be just part of who we are. They become the **sabotaging thoughts** that hold us back from reaching our true potential. They beat us up for making a mistake or for perceived shortcomings. They criticize others and current situations declaring them as bad or unfulfilling, therefore, causing unhappiness.

One of the **first lines of defense against these internal "bullies" is AWARENESS**. Realize that they are merely thoughts and you are NOT your thoughts. Learning to pause whenever you start to feel these negative emotions taking over, transferring your full attention to one of your physical senses such as breath, touch, or sound for several seconds can help to free you from the thoughts and allow your brain to shift from survive mode to thrive mode. It will not happen on the first attempt or second attempt, heck it may not happen even on the third attempt. But studies have proven, that in time you CAN learn to reprogram your brain and create new neuro-pathways that allow you to handle stress in a much more productive, clear-headed way.

Consider how it would be to live a life filled with more optimism since constantly living in fear puts a heavy burden, both mentally and physically on us, and that is definitely cause for concern. We are well aware of the consequences of poorly managed stress, ranging from fatigue to obesity to heart disease. It is of utmost importance that we recognize and take action to handle it in healthy ways before it causes any prolonged health issues. Being able to control stress is a learned behavior, and stress can be effectively managed by taking small steps toward changing unhealthy habits.



IT'S NOT THE  
LOAD THAT  
Breaks You  
DOWN, IT'S  
THE WAY  
YOU CARRY IT.

LOU HOLTZ



## Tips on Managing Stress

**The American Psychological Association offers the following tips on how to manage your stress:**

**Understand how you stress.** Everyone experiences stress differently. How do you know when you are stressed? How are your thoughts or behaviors different from times when you do not feel stressed?

1. **Identify your sources of stress.** What events or situations trigger stressful feelings? Are they related to your children, family, health, financial decisions, work, relationships or something else? You might ask yourself " am I giving too much to others and not enough to myself?" If you are, perhaps it's time to express your needs to others, set some healthy boundaries and take time for yourself without guilt....you need to take care of you in order to take care of them.
2. **Learn your own stress signals.** You may have a hard time concentrating or making decisions, feel angry, irritable or out of control, or experience headaches, muscle tension or a lack of energy. Gauge your stress signals. Practice getting still for a few minutes to pay attention to how your body is feeling (where are you holding tension?)
3. **Recognize how you deal with stress.** Determine if you are using unhealthy behaviors (such as smoking, drinking alcohol and over/under eating) to cope. Is this a routine behavior, or is it specific to certain events or situations? Do you make unhealthy choices as a result of feeling rushed and overwhelmed? Become more mindful of these reactions.
4. **Find healthy ways to manage stress.** Consider healthy, stress-reducing activities such as meditation, exercising or talking things out with friends or family. Keep in mind that unhealthy behaviors develop over time and can be difficult to change. Don't take on too much at once. Focus on changing only one behavior at a time.
5. **Take care of yourself.** Eat whole nutrient-dense foods, get plenty of sleep, drink adequate amounts of water and engage in regular physical activity. Ensure you have a healthy mind and body through activities like yoga, taking a walk, connecting with nature (listen to the birds, start an indoor herb garden) going to the gym (search the internet for tons of workout options) or playing sports that will enhance both your physical and mental health (try something new like indoor pickle ball!). Plan a vacation and take your designated breaks during work (you've earned it...don't consider it a privilege!). No matter how hectic life gets, make time for yourself — even if it's just simple things like reading a good book or listening to your favorite music. **Self-care is the most affordable healthcare!**
6. **Reach out for support.** Accepting help from supportive friends and family can improve your ability to manage stress. If you continue to feel overwhelmed by stress, you may want to talk to a psychologist, who can help you better manage stress and change unhealthy behaviors. Check into whether your town has an Employee Assistance Program and take advantage of it. Try booking a session with your JIF Health & Wellness Coach (that's me! ☺ )

YES LOVE  
YOURSELF. BUT  
ALSO, ANALYZE  
AND BE  
CRITICAL OF  
HOW YOU  
THINK, ACT,  
AND  
BEHAVE. SELF  
LOVE WITHOUT  
SELF  
AWARENESS IS  
USELESS. BE  
ACCOUNTABLE.



## Consider Trying Meditation

**Meditation** is widely recommended as a healthy way to manage stress, and for good reason. It provides many health-enhancing benefits, like reducing symptoms of stress and anxiety, relieving physical complaints like headaches, and even enhancing immunity to illness.

For many of us who have tried meditating, thoughts come in and out of our minds constantly. Our focus may dart from one thing to the other and quieting the mind is next to impossible. But like with anything new, it takes practice. And the benefits are worth the effort!! Here are some basics:

**Quiet Mind:** With meditation, your thinking mind becomes quiet. You stop focusing on the stressors of your day or your life's problems, as well as solving these problems. You just let that voice in your head be quiet, even for a few minutes, which I know is easier said than done. For example, start thinking about nothing now. (It's OK; I'll wait.) If you're not practiced at quieting your mind, it probably didn't take long before thoughts crept in. It's normal...just don't give up trying.

**Being In The Now:** Rather than focusing on the past or the future, virtually all meditative practices involve focusing on *right now*. This involves experiencing each moment and letting it go, experiencing the next. This, too, takes practice, as many of us live most of our lives worrying about the future or relishing and rehashing the past.

**Altered State of Consciousness:** With time, maintaining a quiet mind and focus on the present can lead to an altered level of consciousness that isn't a sleeping state but isn't quite your average wakeful state, either. **Meditation increases brain activity in an area of the brain associated with happiness and positive thoughts and emotions**, and some evidence shows that regular practice brings prolonged positive changes in these areas.

**Less bothered by little things:** Do you sometimes allow yourself to get upset by little things? It is the nature of the mind to magnify small things into serious problems. Meditation helps us detach. If you have never read "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff" by Richard Carlson, I highly recommend it.

**Better Health:** There have been numerous studies pointing to the health benefits of meditation. The reason is that meditation reduces stress levels and alleviates anxiety. And even if you don't feel you can do it, the act of trying (and sitting quietly for a few minutes) can be beneficial! It all adds up.

**Knowledge of Self:** Meditation enables us to have a deeper understanding of our inner self. Through meditation we can gain a better understanding of our life's purpose.

Many people like the idea of meditation, but feel they don't have enough time or patience. But it doesn't take either to try it. Taking a few minutes in the morning to sit quietly before everyone else gets up; this can set the tone for the rest of your day in a positively profound way! Meditation does require an investment of time, but clearing the mind can help you accomplish more in the rest of your day. Try incorporating a few minutes in the middle of your day to recharge and refocus.

Meditation is not about retreating from the world; instead, it gives us inspiration. Whatever you do, if you have peace of mind, your work will be more enjoyable and productive. Remember this, it's not about NOT THINKING. It's about NOT ATTACHING to your thoughts. Acknowledge them when they show up but don't let them take over. Consider imagining them as clouds passing by in the sky, or leaves floating down a slow stream. You are not your thoughts and realizing that is empowering!

**Question to ask yourself:** What is preventing you from being quiet inside? And if you said "I have no time" think about how much time you waste worrying about things you cannot control.



## Walking in the Cold Can Be Beneficial



One of the easiest and least expensive ways to stay physically (and mentally) fit is to walk even in the winter. You'd think a simple activity like walking would be just that, simple. Yet fewer than 50% of American adults do enough exercise to gain any health or fitness benefits from physical activity.

### There are actually benefits to walking in the cold

**You'll Be Happy**—sunlight helps your body produce serotonin, a "feel good" chemical compound which can help minimize SAD (seasonal affective disorder)



**Gives You A Boost of Vitamin D**— another benefit you get from the sun. It helps your body absorb calcium. It combats inflammation. It helps your immune system. And you only need to do a 10 minute brisk walk in the cold to reap these benefits.

**Increases Your Mindfulness**— walking in the cold often has you focusing on one thing "It's cold!" but that's good because it's allowing you to be in the moment so you can give your mind a break from worry. Even if for only a short time.

**Can Improve Your Memory**— a walk outside can have a positive impact on your cognitive function. Being in nature can also enhance this effect.

### Here are some reasons why you should start walking whether outside or on a treadmill:

- ♥ **Walking can prevent co-morbidities such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.** The Diabetes Prevention Program showed that walking 150 minutes per week and losing just 7% of your body weight (12-15 pounds) can reduce your risk of diabetes by 58%. Walking strengthens your heart if you're male. In one study, mortality rates among retired men who walked less than one mile per day were nearly twice that among those who walked more than two miles per day. Same holds true for women. Women in the Nurse's Health Study (72,488 female nurses) who walked three hours or more per week reduced their risk of a heart attack or coronary event by 35% compared with women who did not walk.
- ♥ **Walking is good for the brain.** In a study on walking and cognitive function, researchers found that women who walked the equivalent of an easy pace at least 1.5 hours per week had significantly better cognitive function and less cognitive decline than women who walked less than 40 minutes per week. Think about that! J
- ♥ **Walking is good for your bones.** Research shows that postmenopausal women who walk approximately one mile each day have higher whole-body bone density than women who walk shorter distances, and walking is also effective in slowing the rate of bone loss from the legs.
- ♥ **Walking in short bouts improves fitness too!** A study of sedentary women showed that short bouts of brisk walking (three 10-minute walks per day) resulted in similar improvements in fitness and were at least as effective in decreasing body fat as long bouts (one 30-minute walk).
- ♥ **Walking improves physical function.** Helps prevent physical disability and weakness especially in older adults.

If you're a seasoned walker, keep doing what you're doing. If you've been inactive and tire easily, it's best to start slow and easy. At first, walk only as far or as fast as you find comfortable. If you can walk for only a few minutes, let that be your starting point. For example, you might try short daily sessions of five to 10 minutes and slowly build up to 15 minutes twice a week. Then, over several weeks' time, you can gradually work your way up to 30 to 60 minutes of walking most days each week. **Set realistic goals for yourself. Track your progress. Walk with a friend.** It helps keep you going and accountable. And keep in mind that usually the first step is the most difficult. But once you start I know you will be glad you did...so will your health!

Resource: Ageful.com







## Navigating the Holidays When Plant-Based

Oh the holiday temptations! And if you are trying to follow a whole food plant-based lifestyle, especially if you are new on this journey, those temptations can be extremely challenging to ignore. On top of that, you may have the constant questions from friends and family members as to why on earth would you not want to eat such “delicious food”. Believe me I understand and had to deal with those same questions when I decided to go plant-based.

If you are moving towards a more plant-strong diet or if you have been following this lifestyle for awhile now, these few tips might help you “survive” the holidays.

1. **Be prepared with some answers to those common questions.** When you are first transitioning to a whole food, plant-based lifestyle, you may find yourself having to explain (and justify) your new eating habits to family and friends. This could be challenging when you want to share the many health benefits you may already be experiencing especially when you see loved ones struggling with food-related illnesses. Try to reframe. Food choices are very personal and we were all where they are at one time. It's a process. There is no right way or wrong of doing anything. It's merely a decision. Yet with that said, your decision to eat this way is to be respected and you should be proud.
  - ◆ Simply comment on how much better you feel eating this way and avoid getting into any ethical discussion
  - ◆ It's funny but I often hear my family saying to me “Oh sorry, you can't eat that right?” My response? “Yes, I can eat it...I just chose not to”.
2. **Let the host know you are plant-based.** This may cause some anxiety since they may not know how to prepare anything you can eat. Here are a few thoughts depending on the situation:
  - ◆ If they insist you do not bring anything and you aren't sure what they will be serving, eat ahead of time. I know, not really a holiday party for you. :-)
  - ◆ Let the host know not to worry, you'll bring your own food. Better yet, offer to bring something that can be shared by everyone. Guaranteed there will be folks who will try it and they will love it. (Tip: be sure to fill your plate first before it's all gone!) LOL
3. **You don't have to compromise** on your values or morals for someone else's convenience or feelings.
  - ◆ Try not to feel guilty when Aunt Betty says “I made your favorite dish just for you and now you won't even try it?”
  - ◆ The first year might be tough to navigate when family tries to tempt you with those traditional dishes. Hold to your boundaries. And don't beat yourself up for any decision you make!
4. **Be supportive** of the little efforts family members or friends might express to you once they find out how you are eating.
  - ◆ You might hear Uncle Bob say “I'm trying to add in more vegetables to my meals”. That's awesome and express that to him. Encourage him to keep trying.
  - ◆ Keep in mind your own journey. I too struggled in the beginning. I doubted my choices because of what I heard everyone else saying: you won't get enough protein was the biggest concern. I made this decision for health reasons but my commitment to this way of life has been solidified through ALL the studies I have read to back it up; from all the documentaries I have watched (in disbelief!) and mostly from the blood results I have seen improve in addition to how much better I feel.

This journey is about progress not perfection. Do the best you can and most of all be true to YOU! If you are interested in talking to me about my experiences or have specific questions, I would welcome the opportunity to share whatever I can. Continue to educate yourself. I have tons of resources to offer if you are interested.

**Have a happy, healthy, herbivore kind of holiday!**



# DELICATA SQUASH BAKE



Words from the chef herself: "This dish is simple in nature: Baked squash, creamy tahini sauce, pomegranates, hazelnuts, and fresh parsley. It's a symphony of texture and flavor, and utilizes some of autumn's best produce. In other words, it's oh-so worthy of gracing your dinner table."

Plus, it requires just **9 basic ingredients** and **30 minutes** to prepare. (Double bonus.)

If you have never tried a delicate squash, you are in for a real treat! It's so sweet when cooked and you can eat the skin! Plus this dish looks holiday ready!



\* Save the seeds. Rinse in water to remove any strings and pieces of squash. Pat them dry. Season with your favorite spices. Bake on parchment paper at about 275 for 15 minutes or until they start to pop. Makes a great snack or topping on your salad.

## INGREDIENTS

### SQUASH

2 delicata squash (halved lengthwise, seeds\* removed, cut into 1/2-inch slices)

2 Tbsp coconut oil (melted)

1 pinch sea salt

### DRESSING

3 Tbsp tahini (sesame seeds ground into a paste)

1/2 lemon, juiced (1/2 lemon yields ~1 Tbsp or 15 ml)

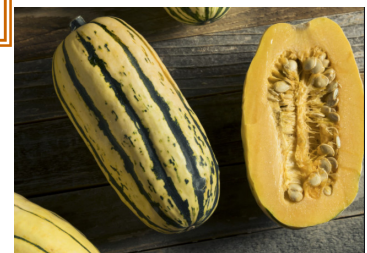
1 Tbsp maple syrup

### TOPPINGS

1/4 cup pomegranate arils

1/4 cup dry roasted hazelnuts (loosely chopped)

1/4 cup fresh parsley (chopped)



## DIRECTIONS:

*Recipe from Minimalist Baker*

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (204 degrees C).
2. Add sliced squash to a bare baking sheet (1 large or 2 small, depending on size of squash // as original recipe is written // use fewer or more baking sheets, as needed, if altering batch size) and toss with oil and sea salt. Then arrange in a single layer.
3. Bake for 20-25 minutes, flipping once at the halfway point to ensure even baking. You'll know it's done when fork tender, golden brown, and slightly caramelized (see photo).
4. While squash is baking, prepare dressing by adding tahini, lemon juice, and maple syrup to a small mixing bowl. Whisk to combine, then add hot water 1 Tbsp at a time and whisk until pourable. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed.
5. To serve, arrange baked squash on a serving dish and top with dressing, pomegranates, hazelnuts, and parsley. Best when enjoyed immediately.

**Notes** \*Nutrition information is a rough estimate calculated with tahini sauce.

### Nutrition (1 of 6 servings)

Calories: 165 Carbohydrates: 11.3 g Protein: 2.7 g Fat: 9.5 g Saturated Fat: 5.3 g Trans Fat: 0 g Cholesterol: 0 mg Sodium: 62 mg Fiber: 2.1 g Sugar: 11 g



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